

# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

MARVIN J. SOUTHARD, D.S.W.  
*Director*

ROBIN KAY, Ph.D.  
*Acting Chief Deputy Director*

RODERICK SHANER, M.D.  
*Medical Director*



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

GLORIA MOLINA  
YVONNE B. BURKE  
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
DON KNABE  
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

## DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

<http://dmh.lacounty.gov>

550 SOUTH VERMONT AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90020

Reply To: (213) 738-4601  
Fax: (213) 386-1297

June 25, 2008

TO: Each Supervisor  
FROM: *Robin Kay for*  
Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.  
Director of Mental Health

SUBJECT: **ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO ENTER INTO SOLE SOURCE CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES FOR A DISASTER TRAINING PLAN AND MATERIALS**

This memo is to comply with Chief Administrative Officer, David E. Janssen's September 1999 letter regarding contracting policy requirements for sole source contracts. It is the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's (DMH) intent to enter into sole source contract negotiations with the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Public Health and Disasters, 1145 Gayley Avenue, Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90024, for the development of a comprehensive disaster mental health training detailing the response to natural or man-made disasters. The training will include various modules, response guidelines and treatment protocols necessary to train County mental health staff and contract providers and other professional associations in the appropriate responses to disaster situations.

Los Angeles County can expect to experience natural disasters such as earthquakes, fires, mudslides and possibly pandemics in the future. Los Angeles is also considered a potential target for terrorist acts against its harbors, water supply, entertainment industry, power plants and other high profile or critical systems. The Department of Homeland Security has listed Los Angeles County under Tier 1 for a potential threat.

It is critically important that the Department be fully prepared to meet the psychological needs of County residents during the pre-incident, incident and recovery phases of a natural or man-made disaster. Preparation will assist in building a sustainable capacity to prevent, protect, respond and recover from acts of terrorism and the psychological impact that follow. Prompt intervention following an event enhances resiliency and recovery. If mental health needs are not addressed in a timely manner, behavioral and emotional dysfunction may develop, worsen or persist. These maladaptive behaviors include, but are not limited to, acute and chronic thoughts about suicide, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, substance abuse and family or work impairment. The

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"*



Department has always responded to critical incidents and disasters and participated in Countywide disaster planning and exercises. This project will enable the Department to develop a comprehensive disaster training program or response protocol consistent with evidenced-based practices to prepare employees and contractors in the roles they would be expected to play in response to a disaster.

The Department proposes to amend the County's Affiliation Agreement with UCLA to include the provision of a comprehensive, collaborative, evidence-based/best practice model, training plan and materials to be used in training County employees and contractors to respond to a catastrophic event. It is envisioned that the contractor will meet with appropriate stakeholders to evaluate current mental health disaster planning across County departments and collaborate with governmental and non-governmental agencies to determine the best manner in which to address the psychological needs of first responders, victims and their families, mental health consumers, special needs populations, and the general community within a culturally relevant context.

UCLA is uniquely qualified to provide these services. UCLA's School of Public Health has a Center for Public Health and Disasters (the Center) to advance interdisciplinary efforts to reduce the health impacts of disasters on human populations. The UCLA Center has been selected as a Center for Disease Control and Prevention Disaster Preparedness Center. The Center has developed numerous trainings for federal and state agencies in the area of disaster preparedness and also conducts field exercises. The Center's director of psychological programs, Dr. Merritt Schreiber has experience in developing disaster mental health operational strategies and conducted numerous trainings for the federal government. He recently received a commendation from the US Surgeon General for his development of training for the Surgeon General's response teams. He has recently been funded by the California Departments of Public Health and Mental Health to work on the California Disaster Mental Health Competencies Initiative, Pandemic Influenza response plan and a disaster mental mass casualty response strategy. Dr. Schreiber has also developed the only known evidence-based rapid disaster mental health triage system, PsyStart, that is part of the training of the American Red Cross, US Public Health Service Emergency Response Teams, California Public Health Nurses association. He blends both academic expertise and real world disaster response to events including 9/11, California Wildfires and has led national terrorism exercises. PsyStart has been included in the US HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response Disaster "playbooks" and is regarded as an important tool to help distinguish the worried-well from the persons truly at risk and in need of psychological services. Dr. Schreiber has recently provided trainings for the States of Ohio, Michigan, California, Nevada, Maryland and was an invited presenter at a recent CDC Disaster Epidemiological workgroup and meetings of HHS Emergency Medical Services for Children.

Each Supervisor  
June 25, 2008  
Page 3 of 3

The total amount for the requested services for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 is \$650,000.00, funded by the Urban Area Security Initiative grant and the State Homeland Security Grant Program awarded by the Department of Homeland Security Office in 2007.

Unless otherwise instructed by a Board office, DMH will proceed with negotiating the sole source Affiliation Agreement amendment within two weeks. DMH will work closely with both the Office of the County Counsel and the Chief Executive Office in preparing the amendment to the UCLA Affiliation Agreement.

MJS:TB:MM:HA:mm

c: Chief Executive Officer